



Trenching and Excavation Policy

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1.0 Policy/Procedure

Excavation work shall follow State legal requirements, including Building Code Requirements and N.C. Occupational Safety and Health Standards (NC-OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1926, Subpart P). Excavations include, but are not limited to, operations such as drilling, digging and trenching.

Employees must comply with the following brief overview of safety controls and all specific requirements which are required for the job and by N.C. Occupational Safety and Health Standards.

- Before any excavation work begins, underground utilities shall be identified and the location marked of underground pipes, electrical conductors, gas lines or other structures.
- Evaluation is required of the trenching site by a competent person who knows and is trained to identify soil types, proper protective systems and hazardous conditions.
- Competent person-one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the working area and who has authority to take prompt corrective action to eliminate hazards and to stop work in hazardous excavations.
- Conduct a daily inspection of the excavation and the adjacent areas prior to work and as needed during the workday.
- If there are any unsafe conditions, work shall stop in the excavation and personnel shall be removed until the problems are corrected.
- Monitor and recognize hazardous atmospheres.
- Monitor and recognize hazardous conditions such as vibration, external loads, weather conditions, ground water conditions and confined spaces.
- Check all protective material or equipment for any damage.
- When excavations are deeper than four (4) feet, ladders or steps shall be located so that a worker does not need to travel more than 25 feet in the excavation before being able to exit. See (NC-OSHA) confined space standard 29CFR-1910.148 for testing before employees enter for excavations greater than four (4) feet in depth.
- Each employee in an excavation shall be protected from cave-ins by an adequate protective system designed in accordance with NC-OSHA Standard 1926, Subpart P.

- Protective systems are required for excavations less than five (5) feet in depth whenever examination of the ground by a competent person indicate a potential cave-in hazard.
- When excavations are deeper than five (5) feet, the sides shall be provided with a protective system (shored, braced or sloped sufficiently) to protect against hazardous ground movement.
- When heavy equipment will be operated nearby, the shoring or bracing shall be able to withstand this extra load regardless of the depth of the excavation.
- For any excavation that a person will enter, all dirt, debris and excavation material shall be effectively stored or retained at least two (2) feet from the edge of the excavation.

Signs and Barricades

All excavations into which a person could fall or trip shall be guarded. While work is being performed in or near the opening, the guards surrounding the area shall be maintained. Barricades at least 3 to 5 feet high and spaced no further than ten (10) feet apart shall be provided. Additionally, yellow and black "Caution, Do Not Enter" construction tape shall be stretched securely between the barricades. Excavations should be covered and not left open overnight, whenever possible.

Additional illuminated barricades are required where vehicular traffic is possible.

Reference (NC-OSHA 29CFR 1910.145 AND 1926.202).